# THE MAIN FACTORS BEHIND VOLUNTARY PREGNANCY TERMINATION ("VTP"): THE CASE OF FEMALE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE II.

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**Abstract** - The practice of abortion in all its forms exists in all countries of the world, regardless of the legislation recommended. Despite its prohibition in Cameroon by the penal code, clandestine abortion continues to be carried out everywhere and in deplorable conditions, leading to many disastrous consequences. It must be noted that post-abortion reproductive health (RH) deaths have become the second leading cause of maternal mortality in Yaoundé because there have been 32 to 46% abortions among women of childbearing age since 1987. The majority of these women are 24-year-olds and adolescents (10 to 19 years old). The main objective of the collection work carried out over a period of 1 month from September 1 to 31, 2018 was to highlight the factors that lead to voluntary abortions among female students at the University of Yaoundé 2. To this effect, we conducted a quantitative, explanatory and analytical cross-sectional study on a sample of 504 female undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students through a questionnaire of about forty questions with a closed majority. The results of the field survey show, after analysis and synthesis, that abortion practice could be influenced by the use of contraceptive methods and their frequency of use. Similarly, the multiplication of sexual partners would expose students to unwanted pregnancies and therefore induced abortions. Girls' perceptions, attitudes and knowledge about Voluntary Pregnancy Interruptions combined with their desire to pursue further education would be factors in the decision to terminate unwanted pregnancy. It is therefore incumbent upon us to address this public health problem in such a way as to combine the strengths of the various stakeholders: from the Ministry of Public Health to administrative and traditional authorities, NGOs and the community. Priority will be given to raising public awareness of the systematic use of condoms to reduce unwanted pregnancies, including induced abortions that cause sterilization, death and other consequences.

**Keywords** - Condom, Sexual Partner, Students, Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy

## I. INTRODUCTION

Abortion is an ancient method of fertility regulation that existed and was used long before the advent of contraceptive methods (McLaren A., 1990). Most countries in Europe, America or Asia practice it legally. In Africa, however, only Tunisia and South Africa legally perform abortions (WHO, 2004). Abortion is considered to be any expulsion of a fetus before the 28th week of pregnancy (LEKE J., 2000). According to the same author, when it is initiated by the doctor to save the mother from a serious health risk, it is called a therapeutic abortion and if it is not, it is considered a criminal act. According to the WHO (2000), unwanted pregnancies are estimated at 150 million per year worldwide and are not an isolated problem since they generate many situations, including VTPs. (Voluntary Pregnancy Termination). There are several types of abortion in literature depending on the conditions under which it occurs, is authorized and is performed. The World Health Organization defines unsafe abortion as one that is performed under inadequate and insufficient health and safety conditions, using hazardous techniques, in unhygienic settings and, in most cases, by unskilled medical personnel. High-risk abortion promotes a high number of complications, which endanger women's health and lives, and produce multiple and varied adverse consequences in different aspects of their lives (Guillaume A., 2007). Induced abortion or IVG is a major cause of maternal morbidity and mortality in Africa (Kulczychi A., Potts M. &Rosen fields A. ,1996). It should be noted that the main victims are teenage girls, young people and singles living in urban or rural areas. At least one in ten abortions involve girls under 18 years of age and despite an often restrictive legislative and regulatory framework and despite the poorest health intervention conditions, the use of abortion seems to be increasing, especially among the younger generations, more among young women in school or wishing to pursue their studies, and in urban areas (Mounah D., 2001).

## II. MATERIAL ET METHODS

Place of study: The study was mainly conducted at the University of Yaoundé 2, more precisely within two main faculties and the 'Centre Medico Social' (CMS) of the said university. These are the Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. Justification for the choice of the place of study: The choice to study the factors explaining the use of induced abortions at the University Of Yaoundé 2 is motivated by several reasons:

- The best knowledge of this institution;
- The rural and urban characteristics of the district to which the University belongs;
- Clandestine use of DSS health areas and the 'Centre medico social' (CMS) in relation to voluntary abortions;

- The large number of girls on this campus in relation to men and their highly developed emancipation.

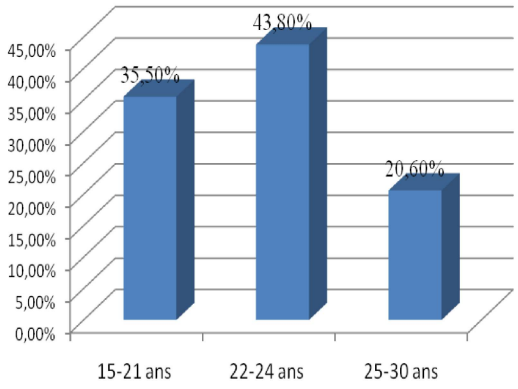
**Type of study**:
This is an exploratory, quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive and analytical study. Indeed, it is conducted on the students present at the time of the survey and measures exposure to the practice of abortion.

**Population under study:**
The study population is the one who is interested in the objectives of our study. It is therefore made up of female students who were duly registered at the University of Yaoundé 2 during the academic year 2011-2012.

**The dependent variable:**
The dependent variable in this study is induced abortion or voluntary termination of pregnancy (VTP). This variable takes two forms: yes if the student actually did it and no for the one who did not.

**Sampling:**
This was a stratified probabilistic method. The stratification was done here at two levels, the first at the level of the two main faculties and the second at the level of the cycles of each faculty.

## III. RESULTS




**Graph 1 : Distribution of female students by age group.**

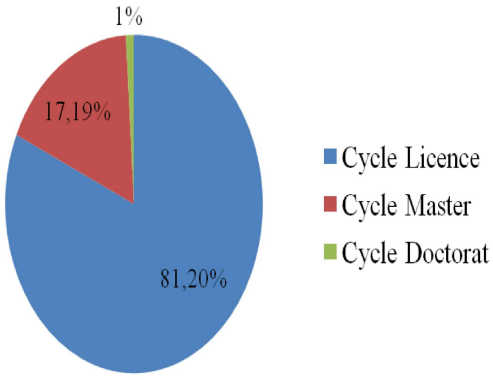
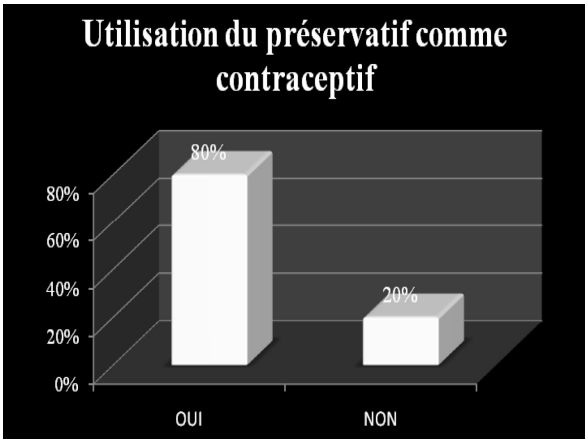
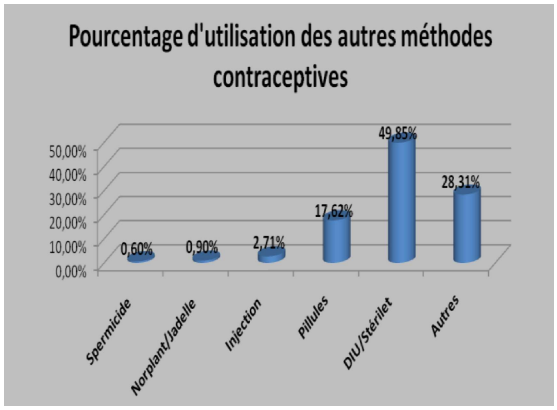



**Figure 1 : Proportion of female students by their level of university education**




**Graph 2 : Distribution of respondents by condom use as a contraceptive method.**




**Graph 3 : Distribution according to the use of other contraceptive methods.**

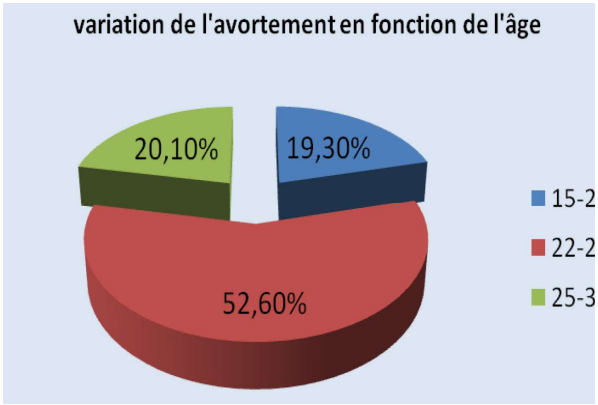



**Figure 2 : Variation in abortion by age group among female students.**

## IV. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSIONS

This survey shows that socio-demographic characteristics have an impact on the practice of abortion at age variable level at a significance level of 5%. Indeed, age is an important factor in deciding on induced abortion among female students; the most affected age group is 22-24 years (52.6%). This remark is in line with the work of Anne, B. (1983), who stipulate that the women concerned by Clandestine Provoked Abortions are rather young (22 years on average). With regard to the number of

sexual partners of girls, it can be seen that abortion cases are almost equally distributed among girls who have at most one partner and those who have at least two partners at the same time in the past 12 months (52.6% versus 47.4%). Although there is an association between multi-partnership and the practice of abortion at the 1% threshold, it can be seen that the risk of abortion does not lie in the number of partners but perhaps in the way in which the sexual act is performed with each partner. This situation could be better explained with the use of contraceptive methods. The effect of contraceptive use shows that it is one of the main factors explaining the use of abortion, if not the most important. Indeed, the use of condoms as contraceptives, frequency of condom use, use of other contraceptive methods and frequency of use of other methods are all strongly correlated with the practice of abortion among female students at the University of Yaoundé 2. With regard to condom use, the association is significant at the 10% threshold: 93% of abortion cases occur among girls who use condoms compared to 7% of cases for those who do not use condoms. This result is surprising because one would have expected the opposite situation. When we look at the frequency of condom use by female students, we find the answer to the above observations. There is a strong significant association between the frequency of condom use and abortion at the 5% threshold because abortions are higher among those who use occasionally (79.2%) than among those who use systematically (20.8%). It has even been shown that girls who systematically use condoms are 10.8 times less likely to perform abortions than those who do so occasionally.

## V. CONCLUSION

It is important to consider people's perceptions, attitudes and knowledge about sex education regarding abortion practice because they also contribute to girls' decision to have an abortion or not. Nevertheless, the priority in this study is the use of contraceptive methods, and that is why we believe that emphasis should be placed on raising awareness and educating young people and adolescents about the systematic use of condoms in particular and on the use of contraceptive methods to avoid unwanted pregnancies. These should therefore be encouraged by increasing campaigns for free condom distribution and awareness-raising on the risks and consequences of abortions related to unwanted pregnancies, not to mention other sexually transmitted diseases.

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